

DISCUSSION.

SIR SHIRLEY MURPHY (Chairman) said that they were very much indebted to Dr. Fremantle for having dealt with a very attractive subject in a very attractive manner. He had raised many points, but, unfortunately, there was not much time left to deal with them.

MR. G. MONTAGUE HARRIS (County Councils Association) criticised the Housing Bill. He considered that it would be a very great advantage if County Councils had greater powers in regard to sanitary administration.

MISS CHURTON considered that the crux of the whole question was the sanitary administration in the country, which seemed to have been entirely overlooked in the Housing Bill.

DR. WM. BUTLER said that there was no doubt that it was due to defective sanitary administration in this country that towns grew up in a haphazard way; but he thought that they had too much to consider before arriving at conclusions as to any detailed method of reform of the sanitary service.

DR. F. J. BURMAN urged the necessity of security of tenure for medical officers of health in small districts, as at present they were at the mercy of persons who chose to put up for the local council.

DR. HERBERT JONES criticised the figures quoted by Dr. Fremantle in regard to suggested houses at Chipperfield, and pointed out that it demonstrated the fallacy of dealing with small areas.

DR. FREMANTLE briefly replied, and formerly moved the suspension of the bye-laws, with a view to the consideration of the following motions:—

1. That this Society, having considered the "Housing, Town-Planning, etc., Bill," is of opinion that no further housing measures are likely to be effective until steps have been taken to reorganise the sanitary service of the country, and put sanitary officers in a position, independent of local influence.

2. That copies of the resolutions be signed with the seal of the Society, and forwarded to the Prime Minister, the President of the Local Government Board, and the official heads of the other Government departments concerned.

The resolution was seconded by Dr. R. Musgrave Craven, but was not carried unanimously, and Dr. Fremantle's motions were therefore referred to the Council for consideration.

THE INFANTILE MORTALITY IN CALCUTTA.

By FREDERICK PEARSE, M.D., F.R.C.S., (Eng.), D.P.H.,
Health Officer, Calcutta.

DURING the year 1907 no less than 4,754 deaths of infants were registered in Calcutta. The number of births registered amounted to 16,224, so that assuming this number to be correct, the death-rate of infants was 293 per 1,000.

There is some doubt whether all the births are registered as the birth-rate calculated on the female population between the ages of fifteen and forty-five years is only 107.9 per 1,000. This is low, but even if we assume a birth-rate of 150 per 1,000 females, aged fifteen to forty-five, the mortality of infants works out at 238 per 1,000.

Still-births (1,243) are not included in the above figures, but they constitute about 76 per 1,000 on the number of registered births.

The following table, giving the numbers of deaths under the several classes will explain the peculiar incidence of diseases in this city.

INFANTILE DEATHS.—Calcutta, 1907.

	Under 1 month.	Up to 1 year.	Total.
Smallpox ...	10	173	183
Measles ...	2	15	17
Fever ...	27	100	127
Malaria ...	5	19	24
Diarrhoea ...	24	92	116
Enteritis ...	24	92	116
Cholera ...	—	39	39
Dysentery ...	10	64	74
Premature Births	524	—	524
Debility at, or } from birth	683	7	690
Marasmus Neglect, &c.	5	28	33
Bronchitis ...	334	953	1287
Pneumonia ...	2	80	82
Tuberculosis } (all forms)	4	3	7
Tetanus and } Convulsions	955	73	1028
Infantile Liver ...	49	179	228
Syphilis ...	4	12	16
All other causes ...	97	66	163
	2759	1995	4754

So that 29 per cent. of children born (registered births) die before reaching 12 months of age, and 17 per cent. die before attaining even the age of one month.

The following comparison may be interesting.

	Infantile Deaths, Calcutta, 1907.	England and Wales, 1901.
Infectious Diseases ...	21.63	9.82
Diarrhoea Diseases ...	21.26	31.87
Convulsions and Tetanus	63.36	13.65
Pulmonary Diseases ...	84.38	23.25
Prematurity and } Wasting Diseases }	76.86	45.79
All other causes...	25.53	20.95
Per 1000 registered births	293.02	145.33

So far as this table affords opportunity for comparison it shows that while diarrhoeal diseases carry off many more infants in England, than in Calcutta, the opposite is the case with regard to pulmonary diseases. Convulsions and particularly Tetanus kill off a large proportion of infants in Calcutta. Tetanus is probably explained by the custom of rubbing dirty earth into the navel. Careless exposure explains the large incidence of pulmonary diseases. The large numbers of still-births and premature births and deaths from congenital debility, show the inherent weakness of the great mass of the population.